

THE PRESS

Duncan's Viet Nam

Thanks to TV, no war in history has become so commonplace, so visually familiar as the Viet Nam War. To the living-room audience, the war is green (jungle, helicopters, uniforms) and red (blood). It is endless patrols by faceless men up numberless hills. The enemy are small, expressionless men crouching on the ground with their elbows tied behind their backs or shrunken heaps of black rags lying motionless on the ground. It would seem that there is nothing more to learn from another look at the war—nothing, that is, until a first-rate photographer puts together a collection of black and white pictures.

Photographer David Douglas Duncan, whose *War Without Heroes* was published last week (Harper & Row; 252 pages; \$14.95), has managed to recapture the war in all its grisly tedium. Looking deceptively like a cocktail-table art book, Duncan's gloom-shrouded pictures of American fighting men are packed more with fatigue than fight. There are no heroic actions; men shave, take muddy baths, clean up after shellbursts, write letters, stare vacantly at absolutely nothing while waiting for the next pointless action. The photographs have the stink of death, the feel of futility and, on any cocktail table, far surpass alcohol as a depressant.

Duncan, who was with the Marines in World War II and later covered the Korean War for LIFE, says in his foreword: "I wanted to show what war does to a man... I wanted to tell a story of war, as war has always been for men. Only their weapons, the terrain, the causes have changed." Duncan is not sure about just what cause the U.S. is pursuing in Viet Nam, but he considers the conflict to be "the greatest American tragedy since the Civil War." He salutes the individual American fighting men for their courage, generosity, simplicity of language and "responsibility to their comrades, convictions and pride."

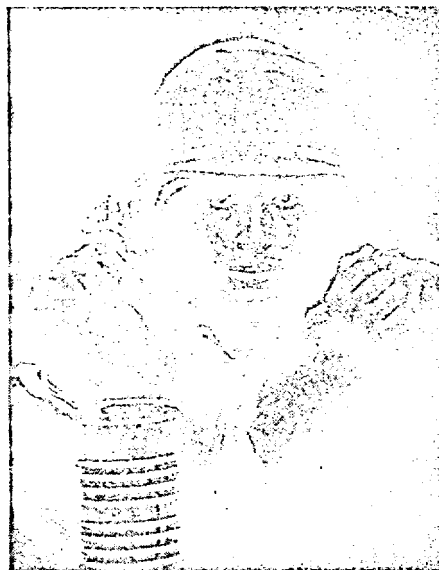
Raising Hell on the Bay

"It is a newspaper's duty to print the news and raise hell," said Wilbur F. Storey regarding the aims of the Chicago *Times* in 1861. Storey was talking in a day when newspapermen would not hesitate a minute to lambast the Establishment. Today's large-circulation papers tend to be part of the Establishment. San Francisco's *Examiner* and *Chronicle*, for instance, are so comfortably settled that the Bay City has become one of the worst-newspapered cities in America.

Which was one of the attractions for a Storey-style journalist named Bruce Brugmann, who arrived in California from Milwaukee in 1964. He worked for one small paper for a couple of years, then left, scraped together \$35,000 and founded the San Francisco *Bay Guardian*.

As his motto, Brugmann adopted "We print the news and raise hell." The result is subjective journalism, thoroughly checked for accuracy. "I have no patience with 'objective' reporting," says Brugmann. "I aim my derringer at every

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reporter and tell him, 'By God, I don't want to see any objective pieces.' This is point-of-view journalism. We don't run a story until we feel we can prove it and make it stick."

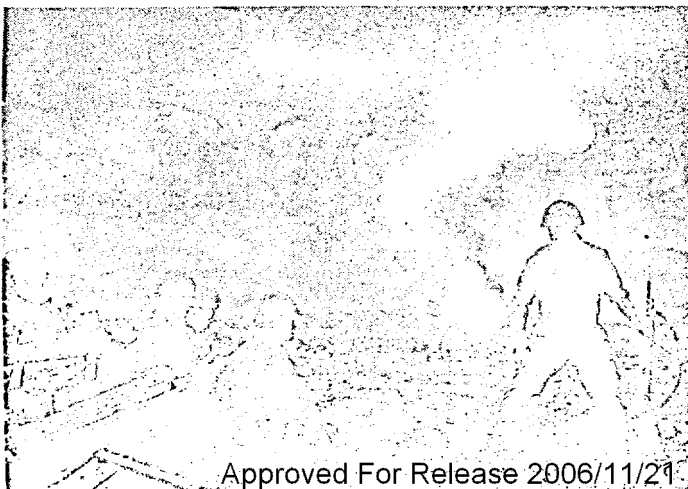
Chinese Weekly. One of the stories they went after concerned the municipal government itself. The *Guardian* charged that the city is losing some \$30 million a year after having invested hundreds of millions in hydroelectric power in the Sierras, bringing it to within 35 miles of San Francisco, where it is turned over to the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. for distribution mostly outside the city. If the city distributed its own electricity, said the *Guardian*, the San Francisco users would benefit. PG&E complained that the problem was not that simple, since the city's power is tied in with an entire gridwork of PG&E's installations in northern California. Now a feasibility study on buying out PG&E's San Francisco power system has been initiated, creating for Brugmann a generous amount of ill will from PG&E.

Brugmann's next assault was aimed at "SuperChron"—the *Examiner* and *Chronicle*, which have merged their printing, circulation, business and advertising departments. When syndicated Washington Columnist Nicholas von Hoffman cited the merger as an example of monopoly, "SuperChron" refused to run his column. Brugmann tried to buy advertising space in both papers to run the Von Hoffman piece, but was refused. When he accused the *Examiner* and *Chronicle* of playing monopoly, an ad salesman retorted, "We're not a monopoly. There are lots of places you can go to advertise. Why, you can go right across the street here and put it in the *Shopping News*. Or you can put it in the *Chinese Weekly*." The Von Hoffman column ran in the *Guardian*.

Brugmann is now testing the Newspaper Preservation Act by suing the *Examiner* and *Chronicle* under the First Amendment for abridging freedom of the press.

Cracked Code. Gasping along on a low budget, the *Guardian*—officially a monthly—has made it to press only six

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